

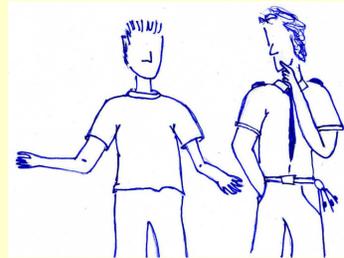
# Punishing with care

By Helen Brown

London School of Economics and Political Science

MPhil/PhD student - Law Department

**Argument:** I believe care work exists in current state criminal punishment practices. However, as care work is often undervalued, this is obscured by our understanding of punishment practices. Below are some examples of paid and unpaid care work that occur in prisons:



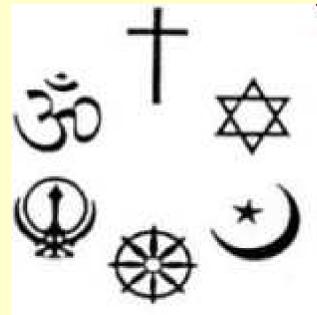
Where a prison officer helps a prisoner to talk through a problem, this may be seen as care work. The officer may be able to suggest a course of action, or signpost the prisoner on to other services within or outside of the prison, who are best placed to help. The prison officer job description on the prison service website includes duties such as encouraging prisoners to 'deal with personal challenges' and 'upholding respect for prisoners', along with monitoring vulnerable prisoners and dealing with bullying and self-harm.

<http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/careersandjobs/becomingaprisono officer/jobdescription/>



## Overview of my research

This argument is a part of my PhD research project, trying to understand the justification and practice of state punishment from the perspective of the ethic of care. I believe an ethic of care perspective can help to enrich our understanding of state obligations towards both citizens and non citizens, including the obligations of the state arising through the penal system. In my view a care-based approach to punishment, focusing on the relationships between and different needs of victims, offenders and the community, can take proper account of individual autonomy and respect the choices of the individual offender, and may also suggest alternative avenues for sentencing practices.

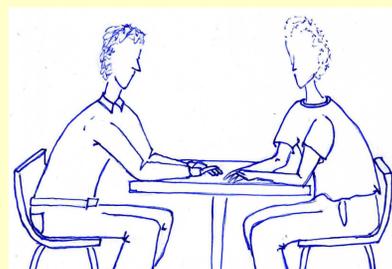


Prison Chaplaincy services can provide support to all prisoners and contributes to their care.

[http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison\\_life/religion/](http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison_life/religion/)

Community members from outside the prison volunteer to visit or write to prisoners to provide them with support and friendship. This is especially helpful for prisoners whose friends and family are unable to visit.

<http://www.newbridgefoundation.org.uk/volunteer-befriend.html>



Prisoners and prison staff often get involved in raising money for charities that help and support other people, such as disabled and inner city children.

[http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/4445107.Dorchester\\_prison\\_inmates\\_helping\\_disabled\\_Dorset\\_children/](http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/4445107.Dorchester_prison_inmates_helping_disabled_Dorset_children/)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/columnists/jimwhite/2369199/Tiger-Healey-behind-bars-for-all-the-right-reasons.html>



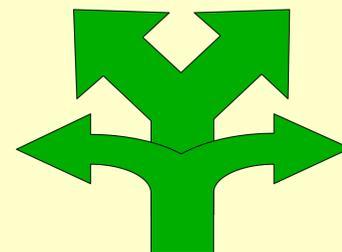
Prison Listeners are prisoner volunteers trained by the Samaritans to offer face-to-face confidential peer support. Listeners help other prisoners to deal with a range of emotional problems, including helping others at risk of suicide. Prisoners also volunteer in a variety of ways that could be described as care work. For example, teaching others with low literacy levels to read, 'Buddy' schemes, and volunteering to provide advice and help to find housing and work for release.

[http://www.samaritans.org/your\\_emotional\\_health/our\\_work\\_in\\_prisons/the\\_listener\\_scheme.aspx](http://www.samaritans.org/your_emotional_health/our_work_in_prisons/the_listener_scheme.aspx)

<http://www.shannontrust.org.uk/>

[http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison\\_life/peersupport/](http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison_life/peersupport/)

[http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/what/208165/peer\\_advice\\_project.html](http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/what/208165/peer_advice_project.html)



## What is Care Work?

The ethic of care requires us to consider our relationships to and the needs of other people, and how these needs can best be met. Care work is any work that helps a person to meet their own needs, especially where the recipient would otherwise find this difficult or impossible. Classic care work examples include healthcare and childcare, for example, providing medical care and meals to injured people, or dressing, feeding and playing with young children. Care work has traditionally been carried out by women as unpaid work within the family. Some authors including Clement<sup>1</sup> and Tronto<sup>2</sup> argue that caring work has been undervalued due to this association with economic unproductivity and with women. However, many kinds of work can include elements of care work, and there is disagreement over how much caring a job requires to count as care work. For example, paid-for child care might be regarded as service provision rather than care work, and a volunteer for the Samaritans might provide emotional support over the telephone to a person they will never see and do not know. Helping a person to talk through a problem can be thought of as care work, as a troubled person cannot do this for themselves without help<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Clement, G., 1996. Care, autonomy, and justice : feminism and the ethic of care, Boulder, Colo.; Oxford: Westview Press p 55-56

<sup>2</sup> Tronto, J.C., 1993. Moral boundaries : a political argument for an ethic of care, New York: Routledge p 165-166

<sup>3</sup> Bubeck, D.E., 1995. Care, Gender and Justice, Oxford: Clarendon Press p 132

## Feedback

Any comments or questions are welcome

Please contact me at [H.A.Brown@lse.ac.uk](mailto:H.A.Brown@lse.ac.uk)

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